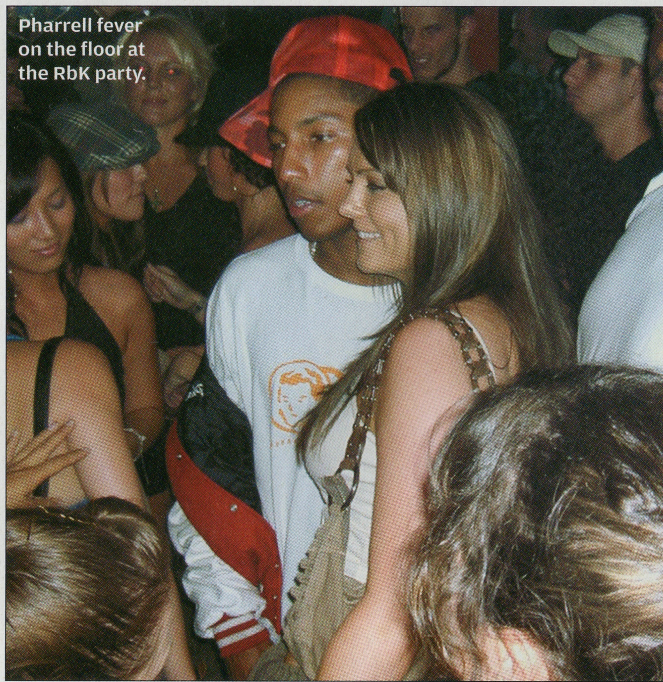


Ladies' N.E.R.D.

Pharrell Williams turns on the charm in Sydney. BY BRONWYN THOMPSON

Pharrell fever on the floor at the RbK party.



THOUGH N.E.R.D. PUT ON TWO of the best shows of 2004 in Sydney and Melbourne, it was the band's poster boy, Pharrell Williams, who took the spotlight on his tour down-under.

The super-producer kicked off the party at the Enmore Theatre on May 18, hand-picking some good-looking gals in the audience and luring them onto the stage to be serenaded with raunchy rhymes. It was enough of a temptation for one excitable blonde, perched high on the theatre's balcony, to have her breasts exposed for most of the set — which clearly worked in getting the attention of Williams. After the

show, he reportedly invited her to join him — clearly just to hear her opinion on the choice of tunes.

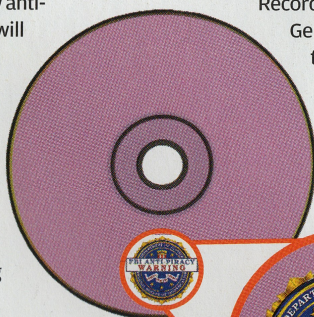
Later on, Williams hit Club 113 on the aptly named William Street in East Sydney for the after-party hosted by RbK (Reebok's hip-hop corporate arm). The charismatic N.E.R.D. star was in fine form on the dance floor, wandering through the booty-shakers and choosing which lucky ladies would be given access to a cordoned-off section of the venue for more Williams action. With a frontman so busy working on the public relations side, it's little wonder that N.E.R.D. could only fit in two concerts for their tour.

PIRACY ALERT

CD Police

Starting soon, some CDs in the U.S. will get a whole lot uglier. The FBI, in conjunction with the Recording Industry Association of America, has unveiled a new anti-piracy seal, which will begin to appear on compact discs released by major labels. "It's an important tool in our campaign to make the public aware that copying and distributing

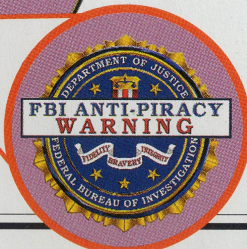
The FBI warning that will apparently scare people into buying CDs instead of downloading them.



music without permission is illegal," says Sony Music. The seal could take up a third of a disc's surface, with another placed on the case. The stamp is voluntary, and some indie labels are refusing to use it. As V2

Records president Andy Gershon says, "I doubt that somebody won't burn, rip or download due to an FBI sticker."

DAVID SWANSON



Craig Nicholls onstage at the Triple M gig; (inset) the Vines united outside the now infamous Annandale Hotel.



The Vines' Sour Times

Is it the end of the road for the group? BY DINO SCATENA

ARE THE VINES THE TRUE spirit of rock & roll or a band in tatters? Is there a difference? It was chaos again in the Vines' camp late-May when the band cancelled their only public hometown show just hours before they were due onstage. Now, the band have cancelled all of their 2004 commitments, including a huge two-month tour across the U.S. with Incubus, plus European festival shows.

The Vines had just wrapped up a U.K. tour in late-May when they stopped over in Asia to play some showcase shows. It was here that singer Craig Nicholls began to unhinge. Suffering severe jetlag insomnia, he reportedly took to his promo shows in Asia with complete disdain for the audience.

Yet there was no sign of trouble when the band hit Melbourne for *Rove [Live]*, followed by a well-received show at the Forum on May 26. The next day, however, the Vines arrived home in Sydney and were booked to play a show at the Annandale Hotel for 450 radio competition winners. According to Mike Fitzpatrick, Triple M program director, the Vines' management had kept Nicholls in the dark about the nature of the show — and when he found out, he lost the plot.

"When they've told him it's a Triple M gig, he's arced up and gone, 'Triple M listeners are bogans,'" Fitzpatrick said. "The

record company has gone, 'No, they're your fans.' And he's gone, 'If I knew it was for Triple M, I wouldn't have done it.'"

The drama started during the opener, "Outtathaway", when Nicholls kicked out and connected with a photographer from a local paper. Nicholls then leapt into the crowd and reportedly had an altercation with some fans. When he returned to the stage, Patrick Matthews put down his bass and walked off, leaving the band to play as a trio. Nicholls then squealed through songs, making little effort

to sing. And at one point he mocked the crowd, calling them sheep.

The following day, Triple M vowed to ban the Vines. "I asked them for an apology, or at least to explain what happened to their fans," Fitzpatrick said. "And I haven't even heard back." The press release said the Metro gig was canned "due to illness", while the Annandale Hotel also put out a release, saying the band proudly showed some "true punk spirit".

As to what happens next, that's anyone's guess. Isn't that what rock & roll is all about?

LOOSE TALK



"How much money does Led fucking Zeppelin need? Do they realise (or care) that when you hear their track now, you visualise a shitty car whizzing by?" — **Trent Reznor**, on artists who sell their music to commercials.

"I will not stoop to the level of these mosquitoes in order to simply sell records." — **Scott Weiland**, announcing he will no longer talk to journalists.

"My grandmother says it's good luck, but I think it's disgusting." — **Cyndi Lauper**, after a bird pooped in her mouth during a radio concert.

"It will be great to be able to train and make my butt look really good in short shorts." — **Jessica Simpson**, on the prospect of playing Daisy Duke in the *Dukes of Hazzard* movie.

"I was eating... lots of sugar and carbs." — **Avril Lavigne**, on the cause of her former angst.

"He was only relevant by accident." — **Morrissey** on Bowie.

"I just ended up being enveloped by all this flab."

— **Franz Ferdinand's Alex Kapranos**, after scuffling with Eminem's bodyguard.

